# Britain completes historic first cross-country flight of electric flying taxi



Britain is on the cusp of a transformative shift in urban mobility, with the successful first journey of the VX4 electric flying taxi—developed by Bristol-based Vertical Aerospace—heralding a new era for air travel. This significant milestone marks the first time a flying taxi has completed a cross-country trip within normal airspace in European aviation history. The Government’s backing for this initiative, bolstered by a £20 million investment aimed at commercialising drone and flying taxi technologies by 2028, signifies a commitment to embracing innovative transport solutions.

Equipped to carry one pilot and up to four passengers, the VX4 can travel at speeds of up to 150 mph, offering a range of 100 miles. Chief test pilot Simon Davies expressed his enthusiasm after the landmark flight, stating, “Taking the aircraft beyond the airfield... was truly special.” He highlighted the aircraft's enjoyable flight experience, noting that it was not only safe but also smooth and quiet, which sets it apart in the evolving eVTOL (electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing) market.

Given the UK's complex transportation landscape, industry experts are optimistic about the potential for flying taxis to significantly improve connectivity. For example, a trip from Brighton to Heathrow, which typically takes over two hours by car, is anticipated to only require about 20 minutes via air taxi. Such efficiency aligns perfectly with rising demands for faster and more sustainable urban transport options.

Vertical Aerospace is not alone in this endeavour; Joby Aviation, a Californian competitor, has also made strides in the UK. Recently, Joby announced a partnership with Virgin Atlantic to launch its air taxi service, which promises to provide seamless, zero-emission journeys. This partnership aims to establish hubs at Heathrow and Manchester Airport. Joby’s electric air taxi can reach a maximum speed of 200 mph, thereby offering an exciting alternative to current travel options. Joby is also focused on delivering its service well before 2030, targeting regions in the UK where traditional transport is less effective, enhancing accessibility to critical urban areas.

Vertical Aerospace’s relationship with Honeywell, another key player, is poised to accelerate the certification of its systems, crucial for its plans to operationalise the VX4 by 2028. This collaboration, potentially worth up to $1 billion, reinforces Vertical’s commitment to meet production demands and navigate regulatory landscapes effectively. Such partnerships highlight the vigorous competition among air taxi startups as they pave the way for urban air mobility solutions while meeting rising sustainability standards.

Meanwhile, the government's establishment of the Regulatory Innovation Office aims to streamline the certification process and mitigate bureaucratic hurdles, enabling quicker adoption of these technologies. Transport Minister Mike Kane has reiterated the government's focus on maximising the benefits emerging from future flight technologies, including flying taxis. Initiatives like these are pivotal in fostering an environment conducive to rapid development and deployment of sustainable transport options.

The journey towards integrating flying taxis into everyday life is not without challenges. As Vertical Aerospace navigates new investment landscapes—like its recent partnership with Mudrick Capital, which has seen a restructuring of its financial obligations—the push for innovative transport continues to face pressure from market realities. Nonetheless, the commitment of companies like Vertical Aerospace and Joby Aviation, supported by significant governmental backing, showcases a shared vision of transforming urban transport.

As the UK prepares to embrace this new frontier of mobility, the flying taxi sector illustrates a blend of innovation, partnership, and policy commitment. With multiple stakeholders working towards this shared goal, the dream of airborne taxis is rapidly becoming a tangible reality, promising to fundamentally reshape travel for generations to come.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/flying-taxi-uk-britain-government-plans-b2759392.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/vertical-aerospace-honeywell-deepen-ties-take-key-air-taxi-systems-certification-2025-05-08/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/flying-taxi-uk-britain-government-plans-b2759392.html), [[3]](https://www.jobyaviation.com/news/uk-electric-air-taxi-service-on-the-horizon/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/707dc6e1-2848-41a6-95da-2536a2aa8a88)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/vertical-aerospace-honeywell-deepen-ties-take-key-air-taxi-systems-certification-2025-05-08/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/3b1d8b23-440f-4533-977b-15a3913df3a2)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/flying-taxi-uk-britain-government-plans-b2759392.html), [[6]](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/sociedad/ni-barajas-prat-aeropuerto-espanol-rompe-planes-taxis-voladores-avion-hotel.html)
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/flying-taxi-uk-britain-government-plans-b2759392.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/vertical-aerospace-honeywell-deepen-ties-take-key-air-taxi-systems-certification-2025-05-08/> - Vertical Aerospace, a British electric-aircraft company, has expanded its collaboration with Honeywell through a long-term agreement aimed at certifying key systems for its VX4 air taxi. The deal, potentially worth up to $1 billion over the next decade, focuses on the aircraft management and flight control systems, including Honeywell's compact fly-by-wire technology. These systems are being certified through the UK Civil Aviation Authority in coordination with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency. The partnership seeks to accelerate VX4’s development for certification by 2028 and initial deliveries by 2030, with plans to deliver at least 150 aircraft. This move comes amid intense competition among air-taxi startups striving to gain regulatory approval and commercialize electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft as demand for sustainable urban transport grows. Honeywell, an investor in Vertical since 2019, will also ensure production capacity to meet anticipated hardware demand. Vertical's CEO Stuart Simpson noted that current funds will last through the end of 2025, with additional fundraising planned to support operations through 2026 and beyond.
3. <https://www.jobyaviation.com/news/uk-electric-air-taxi-service-on-the-horizon/> - Joby Aviation, a California-based company developing electric air taxis for commercial passenger service, has announced a partnership with Virgin Atlantic to launch Joby’s air taxi service in the UK. The partnership aims to offer seamless, zero-emission, short-range journeys across the UK, starting with regional and city connections from Virgin Atlantic’s hubs at Heathrow and Manchester Airport. Virgin Atlantic will support Joby’s go-to-market efforts in the UK through marketing the service to their customers, engaging regulators alongside Joby, and helping to build support for the development of landing infrastructure at key airports. Joby’s electric air taxi is designed to carry a pilot and up to four passengers at speeds of up to 200 mph, and the partnership means Virgin Atlantic customers will be able to reserve a seat on Joby’s aircraft through Virgin Atlantic’s app, website, and other channels.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/707dc6e1-2848-41a6-95da-2536a2aa8a88> - Joby Aviation, a US air taxi company, is exploring take-off sites in London and northern England to introduce its first European services before the decade's end. CEO JoeBen Bevirt revealed plans to engage with real estate owners and local communities to find suitable locations for its electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) vehicles. The company sees significant opportunities in the UK due to current travel inefficiencies, such as the two-hour journey between London and Farnborough. Joby's plans include targeting areas with limited connectivity in the north of England and Midlands, potentially shortening a trip from Manchester airport to Leeds to 15 minutes. Initially, pricing will match Uber's premium 'Black' service, eventually aiming to be as affordable as regular taxis. The company expects to start operations in Dubai and the US by late 2025 and foresees a UK launch significantly before 2030. Despite challenges in the industry, Joby has secured substantial investment and is progressing with certifications, indicating robust global momentum for urban air mobility advancements.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/3b1d8b23-440f-4533-977b-15a3913df3a2> - Vertical Aerospace, the UK air taxi start-up founded by Stephen Fitzpatrick, has secured a $50 million lifeline from Mudrick Capital, a US distressed debt investor. As part of the deal, Mudrick will convert $130 million of existing loans into equity at $2.75 per share and extend the repayment date for the remaining debt to December 2028. This agreement will see Mudrick become the largest shareholder with a 70% stake in the Bristol-based company, while Fitzpatrick’s share will reduce to about 20%. Despite this change, Fitzpatrick will remain on the board as a non-executive director. With this funding, Vertical Aerospace aims to strengthen its balance sheet and pave the way for fresh fundraising efforts. The company plans to continue its operations in the UK and remains committed to bringing its air taxi, the VX4 vehicle, to market by 2028.
6. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/sociedad/ni-barajas-prat-aeropuerto-espanol-rompe-planes-taxis-voladores-avion-hotel.html> - La aerolínea británica Virgin Atlantic se ha unido con Joby Aviation, una empresa estadounidense, para lanzar un nuevo proyecto que ofrecerá servicios de aerotaxis eléctricos para trayectos cortos sin emisiones en el Reino Unido. Estos aerotaxis están diseñados para viajes rápidos de hasta 160 km y pueden alcanzar velocidades de hasta 320 km/h, transportando a un piloto y cuatro pasajeros. Además, estos vehículos generan menos ruido gracias a seis hélices basculantes. Inicialmente, el proyecto operará desde los aeropuertos de Heathrow y Manchester y se expandirá a otros lugares como Mallorca en España. Virgin Atlantic espera que este servicio brinde mayor conectividad y sostenibilidad, permitiendo desplazamientos mucho más rápidos comparados con el transporte terrestre tradicional.